

# Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Glorying in the Cross

PRESSING ON!

LOOK UP!

*SEMPER PARATUS*

MUSINGS OF THE EDITOR

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

KEEP YOUR RELIGION BUSY

# Megiddo Message

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Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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## LETTERS

### Overflowing Help

Dear Brother:

I wish to thank you for forwarding me your MESSAGE which I find so comforting in these days of so much anxiety.

Swansea, So. Wales

D. J.

### Blessing in Receiving and Giving

Dear Brother:

Many times when struggling with a besetment, I find in the Progressive Letter the words of encouragement needed to help me over the difficult spot.

I hope all of the brothers who receive the letters find the same help in them that I do. I know it gives you much pleasure to hear you have been able to help someone else. Therefore, I hope the brothers will write a word of thanks also. This seems a small price for so much help.

Gloversville, N. Y.

E. K.

### Eagerly Awaited

Dear Sister:

Scattered as we are here and there a monthly visit from the fountain-head is eagerly awaited, wondering which of the sisters will it be this time and what will she have to say in the way of instruction.

A rare honor indeed it is to be a part of this family of God's chosen people. There is no other way of gaining a permanent home with the Almighty but to live out daily all He has to say for our admonition. When we read, we must not forget that "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live. For as many as are led by the spirit of God they are the Sons of God" (Rom. 8:13, 14).

Almost every day a test of one sort or another appears on the scene. In all things if we stand true as becomes a true soldier, well and good, we have won a point toward self-mastery.

South Amboy, N. J.

L. M. K.

### Steadfastly Forward

Dear Brother:

The urgent mission of the letter-of-the-month finds a glad welcome with us. We have many certainties that this is the right and only way leading to life everlasting. Sometimes the road is not smooth, but, having put our hand to the plow, we cannot turn back.

The strong arm of the Lord is still outstretched and will guide us safely if we are willing to follow.

St. Catharines, Ont., Can.

A. B. O.

### Enjoys the MESSAGE

Dear Brethren:

I really like to read that paper. It always has so many good points to go by.

Sealy, Texas

W. C. P.

## GLORYING IN THE CROSS

THE great joy and comfort of those instructed in the wondrous truth, who are sincere, is that after this life of transient joy, mixed with uncertainty and disappointment, there is a long, sweet eternity in which God will give magnificent reward to His faithful children. And it is true that "if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable"; for it so quickly passes away, and we silver for the tomb. Now pains and aches and sorrow wear out all of earth's sojourners; and they pass away. If not for this grand eternity there would be a dark night staring us in the face.

How thankful I am that we are on the rock, and know, after all we see here, there is a gladsome rest, a grand eternity. How thankful that we have a firm foundation on which to build, that we have a strong support of our expectation. We see the things that are fulfilled; we know there is a grand eternity. And we wish to keep this prize before us, let the evidence get down into the deepest recesses of our hearts, so as to cause us to live as Jesus did, a pure and holy life. Jesus said, in that wondrous Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). Now to have the wondrous prospect, the blessed privilege of seeing and becoming acquainted with Him who has lived from eternity, should be enough to cause us to search our ways. These words would be meaningless if God would allow someone to pass over the threshold into the Kingdom of God who was not pure of heart.

He declares unto us, "He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile" (I Pet. 3:10). Now, life is predicated only on condition of our seeking this peace. If you long for life and long days, you must refrain your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking guile. Why will we let the little, petty things of this short life upset us? Why are we not rooted and grounded, standing upon the solid rock, "unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord"? Now, this is what we must do.

The Scriptures tell us, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 111:10). We must fear. Until we let it have its influence, we will be holding on to something else. God declares plainly, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66:2). There will be no such thing as any individual stepping over the threshold into the Kingdom of God unless he is of a contrite heart and trembles at the word of God and is pure of heart as Jesus was. We have no time to lose. God has given us life, health and strength, surrounding us with such blessings. Without Him we could not live one second. Thus we are under obligation to serve Him, and we must tremble at the word of life.

We know from the evidence, that is, if we have read our Bibles intelligently, that there is no other way to obtain life but to obey. God told us, way back in the beginning, in His first letter, "I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil. A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I

command you this day: and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord" (Deut. 30:15; 11:27, 28).

We know by this evidence that disobedience will bring death and from the same evidence we know that obedience gives life. It is commonly taught that death on Calvary was done to release us from sin; but the unerring Word teaches us very differently. The only way to obtain salvation is to cease doing evil and bear the cross every day.

### The Cross of Calvary

We have heard the cross preached so much and it has become so fixed in our minds that there is something in the literal cross of Jesus, that we can hardly get rid of the idea. We received it by tradition from our fathers; and people wear a literal cross on their breast as an ornament, thinking it represents the cross on which Jesus was crucified, and that through it only is salvation to be obtained.

For the three years of His ministry He taught the multitudes and discoursed to His disciples but in the Divine Record of the teachings of the greatest of all Preachers we cannot find one item in reference to His death on the literal cross. He failed to leave one statement for His followers or make known by the least utterance that His death on the literal cross was to appease the wrath of God and set us free.

The wooden cross on which Christ was crucified will never save us. It did not save Him. It was simply His last act of obedience. He knew the Jews sought His life and He prayed to be released from that ordeal if it were the Father's will. Since it was not, He obediently submitted so as to finish the work given Him to do. It crowned His lifework of humble submission, willing obedience.

### Christ Preached a Cross of Self-Denial

The first time Christ made any reference to the cross is in Matthew 10. He says, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me." You must love Me ("I am the way, the truth, and the life," John 14:6) above all else. Is that not a cross to bear, day in and day out? It is to have no ungodly affection and to love His Word, the keeping of His commandments to gain endless life, more than anything else. And that is the only cross that He ever preached—a cross of self-denial (Luke 9:23), crucifixion of all ungodliness in each of us. This cross will be something opposed to our nature.

A man who is taking up his cross is becoming more kind and gentle every day; but he has trouble. He will be opposed by father or mother, son or daughter, wife or sister, because he is trying to live godly—above the sinning and iniquity around him.

This is a cross.



"Then said Jesus"—you make up your mind it is true—"if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16: 24). Here is a cross to be taken up, not only take it up but glory in it. A man who does not deny himself of his own evil desires and inclinations is not taking up his cross and will never be saved.

#### The Cross According to Paul: Death to Sin

So many would rather have a picture of the cross with Jesus upon it, thinking it had something to do with our salvation; but not so.

Paul made it clear that it was not a literal cross, but one that all of Christ's faithful followers could share. He testified, "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." And to show we must die the same death, he continues, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is the conclusion of the thought stated earlier in the chapter, "Knowing this, that *our* old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth *we* should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin" (Rom. 6: 6—11).

In order to be free from sin as Christ was freed from it, we have to die the same kind of death! Not on a literal cross, but suffer death of our sinful natures. For further emphasis that it was not the Calvary death that avails, Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2: 20). Not only did he willingly endure the same crucifixion as His Lord but he gloried in it.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6: 14).

And since Paul gloried in the cross, the cross must become our glory too, for he wrote, "Copy me as I copy Christ" (I Cor. 11: 1). This, then, is the deep lesson for us to learn from this apostle sent especially to us—the Gentiles.

#### How to Glory in the Cross of Christ

It is perfectly natural for men to glory in something, and it is true that they glory in various things according to their possessions and dispositions. Some glory in their wealth, some in their learning, some in their ancestry, some in the great power they have gained over other men. Some glory in their popularity, many in their own righteousness. Many glory in their sins and, my friends, how true, multitudes glory in that which should be their shame.

It is not objectionable to hold certain privileges and possessions in high esteem. This is man's portion which he hath under the sun. If a man has amassed a comfortable fortune by industry, hard labor and prudent foresight, and by these qualities of self-reliance and ardor has lifted himself above the average to gain leadership, applause, lands and money, I say, these are qualities he may cultivate and possessions he may guard with jealous care. Yet, not one of these is worth enough to justify a man considering it his chief end and his highest good. If this is all he chooses to glory in, the end will be bitter; for the temporal, the present arrangement, is passing away. What a man glories in he lives for and would die for. Loving it thus, his love for that he glories in is the

supreme affection of his heart. It is above all other loves, even above the love of life itself. Some of the degrees of attachment that humankind are capable of are Inclination, Fondness, Love and Glory. It is for you and me to choose something that is worthy of the highest degree of attachment, something that will stand when the fleeting things have passed away, something that will abide when the storms of life have swept away the shifting sands of human thought.

These words, "glorying in the cross of Christ," come from one who was a mighty scholar, but he never gloried in his scholarship; a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, but he did not glory in his illustrious lineage; born to be a leader of men, yet he never sought personal aggrandizement. In all his glorying he had but one theme above all other thoughts, and that was in glorying in the cross of Christ, crucified unto the world and the world unto him. Paul never gloried in the cross of Calvary's Hill, the Greek cross, the Maltese cross, nor the Rose cross; nor a cross carved from wood, stone or metal. He gloried in the cross of reconciliation, acknowledging the Eternal God in all his ways; a cross that brought crucifixion to the carnal nature; a cross that brought mortification to the deeds of the body; a cross that brought the shedding of blood, a death to sin. This is the cross and the only cross that can reconcile us to God—a cross that, if we will but suffer and bear, will bring to us peace with God both now and through a gladsome eternity.

"If any man will be my disciple let him take up his cross" and bear it joyfully, not only bear it but glory in it. Yes, glory in it, a cross that will separate us from a wicked world and make us a friend of God; a cross that will cause us to pass from ignorance to knowledge, from foolishness to wisdom, from licentiousness to restraint, from lust to purity, from godlessness to God.

The cross of Christ is a stumbling block to the wise of this world and foolishness to others; but today let us thank God it has met all the forces that have been hurled against it, whether Judaism, or pagan or papal philosophy. Through the centuries the religious world have been singing,

"In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time,"

but, the fact is, they have never yet caught the vision of that cross that brings self-denial and patience, suffering even the loss of all things that men might become reconciled to God and then God to us. They glory in the literal cross on which Christ died, or a mere effigy of it, a gilded cross upon the breast or upon the mantel piece, upon the altar or the church spire. No matter how beautiful, there is nothing there in which to glory.

#### Benefits of the Cross

I ask you today, Where did Paul exhibit a splinter or a nail from the cross of Calvary? and the answer comes ringing back, "Nowhere." The cross our beloved Paul preached is the key to an endless life. It is the way to God. It is the Eternal's method to reconcile man unto Himself. Oh, the power of the cross of Christ which Christ gloried in! It is life-imparting, joy-bringing, peace-giving. It is the power of God unto salvation. Oh, my fellow Christians, are you glorying in that cross today? It

will lift you above the low, the groveling, the sensual. It will lift you from the lowest stream of human thought. It will make you right and keep you right. And this is sufficient evidence of its divine origin.

"Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:7, 8). Oh, what glorying in the cross! Our Master said, "I seek not mine own glory, but the glory of Him that sent me. Yes, see our great Example glorying in the cross, glorying in that baptism that brought death—a death to sin. Oh, my beloved brethren, are we willing to be baptized with him? Are we able? Then take up the cross, not only bear it but glory in it. Whether it brings trials, disappointments, losses, sacrifice, bear it every moment, every hour, every day. It will work out for us an exceeding weight of eternal glory. Fellow Christians, if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him. This old rugged cross, the mighty fortress and bulwark of primitive Christianity, is the cross that leads home. Millions have tried to get home some other way, but they soon lose the path to that beautiful City.

"Many," said the beloved Paul, "walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, . . . whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Phil. 3:18, 19). Ah yes, that is what they mind: the low, the groveling, the sensual things, the flesh. The cross of Christ will cut away all fleshly things. But they are carnal; they add sin to sin.

Do you really love the Truth? Are you glorying in the cross of Christ? If so, then you will not go through the world complaining and apologizing for being a Christian. There will be no more low-toned and sickly religion found among us. Wry faces will disappear. We will sing songs at midnight as we journey along the pathway of life, following in the steps of our Master, never once laying down the cross but bearing it on and on till at last we lay it down for a crown.

### The Dangers of Unconfessed Sin

Get right with God, take up the cross, confess and forsake. As long as sin is unconfessed, it is unforgiven, and we can rest assured there is deceit in us. We first begin by not allowing ourselves to be condemned; then we deny the sin; then we pull every sort and manner of string to cover it up. In doing this we have to use pretexts and we follow crooked courses, so the habit of self-deception grows. Remember, it is first self-deception. We deceive ourselves. Having deceived ourselves, all other deceptions become easy. We have to keep up a good appearance, and in order to do this we conceal and evade and put on disguises.

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave,  
When first we practice to deceive."

As the process goes on, it ends in lying and hypocrisy, and the result is the spirit of guile. We see the beginning even in children. They conceal their faults and magnify their virtues. It is seen in youth and middle age as men resort to a variety of means and tricks to keep up a false show in view of their fellow men. It becomes confirmed with advancing years and, sad indeed, it becomes a hard-

ened cement in old age. Oh, blessed is the man whose sin is forgiven, in whose spirit there is no guile. Pursue after Truth as never before. Pursue her till her loveliness becomes more lovely and her beauty more beautiful; make her thine forever.

### Strong Temptation

Some ask, "Why am I tempted so strongly?" Because God wants to make a man of you. God does not want weakness, flabbiness, uselessness. He has given us barriers to climb, foes to fight, storms to breast. Yes, He has demanded our strength and manhood. If you would be a child of God, remember the cross is given to lift us up to rule self, so that we may be worthy to rule others. He that ruleth over men must be just, tested, true and tried. Let me beseech you, if you have been walking toward the City, that it is time and high time to run or you will never make the tower of safety in the City of Refuge before the Euroclydon storm bursts on the world and your escape is cut off forever.

Whatever you do, do quickly, for you cannot long remain as you are. For a few brief days in May the orchards are white with the blossoms. They soon turn to fruit or else float away useless and wasted upon the idle breeze. Many will never take up the cross and bear it, for they are past feeling, but they that have clean hands will grow stronger and stronger. They will lay hold on eternal life.

This man who gloried in being crucified with Christ, with urgent pleading, wrote, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:1, 2).

### Resolution

Let us go forth and imitate our great Example, following in His footsteps, bearing the cross of Christ on and on over the rugged pathway of life. Let us never forget that the Cross of Christ brings sacrifices, and "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17).

Let us go forth today determined to obey God, to bear the cross and do. Yes, obey Him in self-denying duty, crystallizing everything into faith, then prove your faith by your works. Remember, "faith without works is dead." Let us not have a dead faith. If you have been neglecting prayer, go home and set up your altar. Lay hold of the work the harder. Your time, your talents, your energy, your all belongs to the Lord. Paul, the great apostle, struck the key-note of his whole religious life, when, in the gush of his first feelings he cried out, "Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?" Let us grasp the cross and bear it to the end, in that great Day to lay it down for a crown.

"Fame is vapor, popularity an accident; riches take wings—only one thing endures—that is character."

# Dressing On!



## SCENE V

### VISION OF THE FUTURE.

*The Biblical record closes with PAUL a prisoner in Rome "in his own hired house," where we have seen him in the past three scenes of the drama. Clement of Rome, who died A. D. 101, completes the record. According to him, PAUL was acquitted of the charges against him, which were more or less vague at best, and was active for a short time in the mission field, was again arrested and brought to Rome where he was martyred by order of the Emperor Nero, A. D. 67, or 68. This tradition may or may not be true, but there is nothing improbable in it, and we have chosen to follow it in the final scenes.*

*The great apostle, thinner and grayer, heavily fettered, sits in a gloomy dungeon, awaiting the Imperial verdict. There is a high, barred window at rear center. At left front, rising to the level of the corridor outside, is a short flight of stone steps, at the top of which is a heavy grated door. The only furnishings are a straw bunk, covered by a blanket, a stool, and a crude table.*

*In the uncertain light, PAUL is trying to read. The key grates in the lock, and the door swings inward, as the unseen JAILER'S voice is heard.*

JAILER. A visitor for you, sir. [PAUL rises. RUFUS enters, carrying a small basket. He a young man, evidently of Greek extraction.]

PAUL. Oh, good morning, Rufus. Or is it morning? I can hardly tell day from night in this cell, and I have no way of knowing the time of day.

RUFUS. It is afternoon, Brother Paul, a very hot afternoon. I have brought you some food which we hoped will tempt your appetite.

PAUL. [lifting cloth] All this—for me?

RUFUS. Yes, you know how Mother is.

PAUL. Ah, yes—your mother . . . and mine.\* So many things she did for me, even back in Berea; and how much she has done ever since my coming to Rome. It was she who provided for me when I was penniless, after the shipwreck, and it was you people who helped me find a house. In fact, she paid my first month's rent herself. Throughout my first imprisonment she sent me food and comforts. How can I ever thank your family enough, Rufus? How can I repay you?

RUFUS. The thanks are on our side, Brother Paul, and we can never repay you. If you could know how good your face looked that day when we met you at Milo's tavern—

PAUL. Probably as good as yours looked to me. But I see you have a letter for me.

RUFUS. Yes, from Timothy. Go right ahead and read it; don't mind me.

PAUL. [after reading silently] It is mostly church busi-

*in prayers . . . in watchings . . . in fastings . . .*

ness, Rufus. The church in Ephesus is having its troubles, with heresy and backsliding, and ordinary human nature. Timothy has his hands full, poor lad.

RUFUS. How is his health?

PAUL. Much better. His visit to me last winter was too much for him, I fear. He says the church is praying daily for my release, but so far as I can see, it does not appear to be God's will. We were both fortunate to escape the great persecution in which so many of our brethren died, but the end must come some time. I have filed an appeal, but the Emperor has no love for me since I converted one of his favorites. He took it personally, so I hear.

RUFUS. [looking nervously about, in incipient claustrophobia] How do you stand it in this awful place? I'd go mad.

PAUL. Oh, it could be worse. And, when all is said and done, what can I do about it? It is not much like the old house arrest days, of course. My jailer is kind, but he has his orders. The food is bad, but so is prison food the world over—at least I've found it so. Luke is permitted to see me every day, for which I am very thankful. The worst thing is the rats—there's one now! I am not complaining, but there is still so much to do and so little done. There are subversive forces to be fought in the churches. There are letters to be written. I wish I were two, so I could do more.

RUFUS. Do you have a light at night?

PAUL. No, it is not allowed. It is wearisome to sit in the dark, but I am thankful I have so much of the Word written in my mind so I can meditate to some profit, and plan my letters for the next day's writing when Luke comes.

RUFUS. Is there anything I can do for you, Brother Paul?

PAUL. [rising and speaking very earnestly] Yes, Rufus, there is. I know I shall not be with you long. As I face the end I have no fear for myself, for I have searched my heart and feel that my personal work is done. Now someone else must carry on. That someone is you, Rufus—you and all the brethren who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

The greatest comfort you can give me is your promise that you will be true to the faith, an example to the flock and a voice for Christ; that you will keep yourself pure and the church pure, so that we may all live together, world without end, in the future Kingdom of God. Will you promise me, Rufus? [Clasps his hand].

RUFUS. [solemnly] Yes, Brother Paul, I will. For you, and for God, for my own salvation, and for the glory of the church of Christ, I will be true.

[The door creaks open]

JAILER. Time to go, sir.

RUFUS. Farewell, brother; I will see you again. [Exit]

The door closes. Paul paces a turn or two, then sits on his bunk, reclining as weariness overcomes him. An ANGEL appears from right rear, in a shining white robe. PAUL rises, then kneels. The ANGEL raises him up.]

\* "Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine" (Romans 16: 13).



ANGEL. Fear not, Brother Paul. I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God, and I have come to strengthen you, for you are greatly beloved. Be of good courage, O servant of God. Be not afraid of what men can do to the mortal body, for your name is written in the Book of Life and no man can blot it out. Only a little longer to endure. Your rest shall be sweet and secure.

PAUL. [*eagerly*] Tell me—tell me, O Gabriel, what of my beloved churches when I am gone?

ANGEL. The church of God is stronger than the power of Imperial Rome, and in the end she shall triumph over all earthly powers and lay them in the dust. But as you have long known, there must first be bad times—very bad. The prophecies of old are moving toward their fulfillment; the mystery of iniquity is already working, and will work until the last witness is destroyed, and the Truth falls to earth, there to lie dead, as Daniel foretold, for a time, times, and a half—1,260 years of darkness.

PAUL. And then—?

ANGEL. Then life enters into it, and it stands upright, never again to fall! This will be in the last hour of the day, the last chapter in the plan of salvation. Then, very soon, comes the end, and the Kingdom of God.

PAUL. How will this be?

ANGEL. A great man, an excellent teacher, a faithful and wise servant, shall be raised up to perform this mighty work, in a land far beyond the great ocean, a land no man of this age knows. In a new world, where all men are free, the Truth shall be restored.

PAUL. By faith or by sight?

ANGEL. By faith alone. No vision, no miracle, no sight or voice of angels, but only the naked Word to guide him.

PAUL. A mighty work indeed, a work requiring a truly great man. Would that I could see and know him.

ANGEL. You shall see him at the Judgment, Paul, and enjoy his company through the ages of eternity. Is not this enough?

PAUL. It is enough. I can wait.

ANGEL. But that you may recognize him when you see him in that Day—look!

*[The light fades into blackness, and where the grated window was a picture slowly takes form and gathers brightness. We recognize the features of the latter-day "faithful and wise servant," our founder, the Rev. L. T. Nichols, on whose anniversary and in whose honor the drama was presented. For a long moment the two, mortal and immortal, gaze in silence; as the ANGEL begins to speak the vision dims and the only light is the uncertain gray of the dungeon.]*

ANGEL. Look well and remember. Only once in a career of a planet does such a man appear—a special instrument for a special work. Remember . . . Farewell.

*[PAUL kneels as the ANGEL vanishes, and remains kneeling in prayer as the curtain falls.]*

Next Issue: "I HAVE FINISHED MY COURSE."

Someone has said that the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ will mean:

The prophetic word will be Verified,  
The sleeping saints will be Unified,  
Believers will be Glorified,  
Satan will be Classified,  
Israel will be Vivified,  
Mankind will be Pacified,  
Creation will be Gratified,  
The earth will be Beautified,  
Christ will be Satisfied,  
And the Father will be Magnified!

## Look Up!

AMID the bustling and hurrying crowd on a busy street, a hapless individual made his way slowly and carefully. His body was twisted and bent, partly with the infirmities of age but more so from a physical malady. He was so stooped that it was veritably impossible for him to look up unless he were to lie down. To see any distance ahead was out of the question. His visible sphere in which he moved was one of only dirt and grime of the street, those things trodden down by humanity. Such a sight made one count his blessings and to think how dreadful not to be able to look up at the sky, which, as Emerson said, "is the daily bread of the eye."

The sky is what the prisoner longs for and what the city-dweller often forgets. And we, who are not bowed down by any such infirmity, we, who can walk upright, do we take the time to look up? The pageant of the sky affords us much for contemplation. It is God's handiwork. How many of us lift our heads to look up for a moment in reverence? Far too few, to be sure, and it is not because of any physical inability, either. Looking up in moments of happiness turns our joy to exaltation. Looking up in moments of grief can turn our sorrow to hope. The sky overhead is the oldest symbol of freedom known to man.

So, whenever the world appears to be at its worst, take time out to look up at the splendor overhead. The chances are it will be at its best. At night the sky will appear full of familiar stars. We think of space as being densely populated with stars, when in reality it is relatively empty; for in space, stars are the exception and not the rule. Beyond the billions of stars that have been accounted for, the mighty telescopes tell us that there is space and more space. So vast, so immense, so limitless is the sky.

"The heavens proclaim God's splendor, the sky speaks of his handiwork; day after day takes up the tale, night after night makes him known; their speech has never a word, not a sound for the ear, and yet their message spreads the wide world over, their meaning carries to earth's ends."

It is toward this vast limitless expanse of space that our interest should be and where our hope should be centered. The fulfillment of glorious promises will come from that direction. It was in that direction that our Saviour ascended after His resurrection. The apostles were rewarded for looking upward. "As he [Christ] went up, their eyes were fixed on heaven; but just then two men stood beside them, dressed in white, who said, 'Men of Galilee, why stand looking up to heaven? This Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven will come back, just as you have seen him depart to heaven.'" He was taken to one of those beautiful worlds on high, to be at His Father's right hand. There He is being taught and schooled in preparation for His kingship on this earth.

Elijah, too, was taken into one of those wonderful worlds on high. He too, is studying for a great work, as he is to be Christ's forerunner (Mal. 4:5). Both Christ and Elijah will return to this earth out of that ethereal vastness. Seeing that the coming of Christ and Elijah is one of the last remaining prophecies yet unfulfilled, let us lift our heads and look up, for we know that God will bring to pass all that He has promised.

We now find ourselves surrounded by just such conditions as Apostle Paul prophesied for our days. He said, "... there are hard times coming in the last days. For men will be selfish, fond of money, boastful, haughty, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, irreverent, callous, relentless, scurrilous, dissolute, and savage; they will hate goodness, they will be treacherous, reckless and conceited, preferring pleasure to God." This is a long list of evils of which men are guilty in these last days. Jesus said, "When these things begin to happen, look up and raise your heads, for your deliverance is not far off."

We have only to look down at the sordid condition of earth with mortal man at the helm and we see the dire results of his mismanagement, political corruption, and war with its ever increasing expenditures. Because of this crucial condition of the nations, mankind find themselves in a state of stress, disappointment and despondency; yes, "the nations are in dismay, bewildered at the roar of sea and waves, men swooning with panic and foreboding of what is to befall the universe." All this is hastening the time for the fall of man's regime.

It is so much easier to look down than to look up, spiritually. We need to keep a constant watch on our lower nature, the "old man" as it is often called, which tempts us to look with longing memory at the way of life we have left behind. Looking down, we see only darkness, uncertainty and sorrow. We must lift our gaze to the heavens from whence cometh our help in troublesome times.

To look back is to look down. We find that we have a definite command not to look back. Angels were sent to Lot to hasten him and his family from the destruction of doomed Sodom. Taking them by the hand, the angels said, "Now fly for your life; never look behind you, stay nowhere on the basin of the plain, but fly to the hills." Lot's wife did not look up to the heavenly messengers who were helping her escape, but disobeyed in looking back. She looked earthward and lost her life. Many years later, Jesus, our Redeemer, said, "No one is any use to the Reign of God who puts his hand to the plough and then looks behind him." Our only possible excuse for looking back must be to derive useful lessons from past errors.

With the priceless pearl of Truth in our possession, why should we ever have any other desire than to look up beyond the fleeting things of this mortal existence? Looking up into the heavens, of which this earth will shortly be a part, can we not visualize, to some extent, the glories which the inhabitants of those worlds on high possess? Let us remember that they too, were once in much the same condition as our earth is today (see Rev. 22: 8, 9; Eph. 3: 10-15).

We can also look up to the time when we shall be able to traverse the heavens and visit those worlds in the immensity of space. We have the promise that "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings [power] as eagles." And again we are promised that "The wind blows where it wills; and you can hear its sound, but you never know where it has come from or where it goes: it is the same with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Such perfect freedom is unattainable in this present mortal state.

Then "lift high your eyes, look up; who made these stars? he who marshals them in order, summoning each one by name. For fear of him, so mighty and so strong,

not one fails to appear." There are wonderful things in store for those who will look up and see beyond the trials and tribulations which we must go through for the purpose of perfecting our characters. "The slight trouble of the passing hour results in a solid glory past all comparison, for those of us whose eyes are on the unseen, not on the seen; for the seen is transient, the unseen, eternal."

The Lord often knocks us down so we will be able to look up and see by comparison what minute specks we are in His eternal plan. Whether He gives us prosperity or adversity, we must bear a thankful and joyful countenance, knowing that all things are working for our good, that we may be participants in that eternal future, when this earth is made a part of God's heavens.

## Semper Paratus

THE United States Coast Guard has chosen *Semper Paratus* as their motto and pledge in times of peace or war. Through surf and storm and howling gale they must be *always ready* to fight and save or fight and die. With *Semper Paratus* guiding their actions the Coast Guard has served with distinction in all wars in which the United States has been involved. In every emergency—in every crisis their one answer is: *Semper Paratus—always ready!*

As this pledge has become the guiding theme in the lives of the valiant men of the Coast Guard—it can well serve, and indeed must be the ruling force in the life of the Christian soldier!

Ready! What alertness, energy, zeal, courage, action, instantaneousness the word at once suggests to the mind! But not only ready, sometimes—perhaps. No, that is only to invite attack and defeat by the foe; but the challenging motto, *Semper Paratus* hails victory—no provision made for lasting defeat! *Semper Paratus* means, always ready to face every pain, sorrow, trial, temptation, trouble, woe, every onslaught of sin without, within, with true Christian fortitude, and to carry it to a glorious triumph at last—"resisting even to blood" that the Cause of Christ may not suffer loss.

It is the duty of the Coast Guard to enforce maritime laws and treaties, protect life and property on the high seas, on the Coast and in inland flood disasters, safe guarding of navigation on the high seas and in port; also maintaining light-houses and other aids to navigation, etc. Their duties entail great danger, hardship and loss of life to the men as they resolutely carry their motto to fame and glory. And we as citizens of the United States should give thanks for their untiring and ready service.

Above all, we should give thanks for the heroic work of that noble legion—God's true Soldiers of this and past ages. Christians as soldiers and mariners on God's high seas of life have holy and righteous laws to keep and enforce in their daily struggle against the forces of sin. We as Christians are in a constant state of war—and can know no peace, save the great peace of mind achieved by victory over some evil of our lower nature; for only as we kill the "old man" completely shall we enjoy the reign of peace on earth when warfare, literal or spiritual, shall have no part in the lives of God's victorious soldiers. These are the days of our warfare on earth; now is the time for us as Christian soldiers to be fired with zeal as Christ our Mighty Captain charges His followers to heed God's *Semper Paratus*. "Be ready always" is the



challenge that rings in our ears today, as indeed it has been the divine motto from the time God first enlisted soldiers to fight against the hosts of sin—"be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

What a challenge! Are you and I meeting it? Are we meeting it even in our own lives, so that when doubt or lack of faith assails we may swiftly and successfully check the deadly onslaught by a "Thus saith the Lord"? Are we ready?

A guardian and protector against danger on the high seas of life enforced these noble principles and their warning beams flash the signal even now, to "be ready"!

"Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men" (Tit. 3:1, 2).

David, a successful soldier in literal warfare as well as a soldier of God, showed the necessity and wisdom of being ready for life's most crucial test, that of being ready to acknowledge and being truly sorry for sins committed, when he cried:

"I am ready to halt, for my sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin" (Psalm 38:17).

"But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong—" Have we not felt, do we not feel that the foes we fight, the evils that are within are "lively and strong"? Alas, if we are not *always ready* to stand firm, determined to win! The enemy is always ready. Are we always ready to give battle or are we only ready to flee before them?

Jesus said, when confronted with a temptation, "It is written." He was *always ready* with the sword of the spirit, the Word of God!

Christian soldiers, we too have a coast to guard, even holy ground. We have a Light to trim and maintain—there is no chance of survival in this dark, stormy night of sin unless the beams of Truth are kept flashing to show us our position that we may keep in the right channel and be safely guided to port. We have laws to keep—fellow mariners to aid and help save, as our frail barks are tossed to and fro by the billows of temptation and woe. Will *Semper Paratus* become our watchword in these closing moments of the battle? The Master Seaman calls,

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

## OBITUARY

### BERTHA E. MACK

On May 25, 1957, funeral services for Mrs. Bertha E. Mack, of Lamont, N. Y., were conducted at the Weeks Funeral Home, Silver Springs by Brother E. C. Branham. Interment was at Oakville Cemetery.

Sister Mack and her late husband had been interested readers of our literature and had paid many visits to our Church and Mission Home during the thirty years since contacting our missionaries via the Gospel Car.

The deceased leaves to mourn her loss, one son, Otto Mack, Akron, N. Y., and a daughter, Mrs. Florice Ames, Silver Springs, N. Y., four grandchildren and three great grandchildren, and many friends and neighbors.

How sweet and blessed to know that beyond this vale of the shadow of death, "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10).

## Musings of the Editor

IT HAS been said, Prayer is the key that opens the day to God. But too many people forget to pray. In years gone by the head of the family felt it his duty to lead the household in some type of devotion.

Before each meal grace was said. If before the entire family had taken their places around the table one of the children should want to start eating, one of the parents would restrain it by saying, "Wait a minute, until we have given thanks." And at evening before anyone retired the entire family would gather in the living room and either the father or mother would read a chapter from the Bible or ask one of the children to read. And then a prayer of thankfulness for the blessings of the

### Behind Closed Doors

day would be offered, forgiveness asked for each time one had mistreated the other, or when God's sacred Law had been violated.

Teen-age vandalism was not the problem then that it is now. If families are to be bound together, then let the family altar be rebuilt. And above all let us not neglect secret prayer. It is at this sacred moment that we can open our hearts to God and implore help and forgiveness for the human weaknesses known only to ourselves and Him. Jesus spoke vitally of this close contact with God, and of its correct approach, when He said: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:6).

A man stepped into a telephone booth in a railroad station to call an out-of-town friend. He didn't bother to close the door behind him. He picked up the telephone directory but it was too dark to read the print. He looked and felt around for the switch but found none. Stepping out into the waiting room again he complained to a R. R. employee that there was no light in the telephone booth. The worker inquired, "Did you close the door?" "No," said the man. "Close it, and you will have light," answered the employee. So it is when we close the door to our closet, shut out every concern save our need for help and strength from above, that we see the light of God's will for us.

## THE MARKS OF A SIMPLE LIFE

Simplicity, in truth, is less dependent upon external things than we imagine. It can live in broadcloth or homespun; it can eat white bread or black. It is not outward but inward. A certain openness of mind to learn the daily lessons of the school of life; a certain willingness of the heart to give and to receive that extra service, that gift beyond the strict measure of debt which makes friendship possible; a certain clearness of spirit to perceive the best in things and people, to love it without fear and to cleave to it without mistrust; a peaceable sureness of affection and taste; a gentle straightforwardness of action; a kind sincerity of speech—these are the marks of the simple life, which cometh not with observation, for it is within you.

—Selected.

# Meditations

## On the Word

*"And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious. But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee" (Ezekiel 2: 7, 8).*

Obviously the foregoing divine directive has special application to the leaders of Christian worship, but in a broader sense it applies to every loyal supporter of the cause of the Eternal. None of us lives to himself, each must be a brother's keeper. And the crux of this vital command is: "But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house."

God never maintains two standards of conduct, one for the flock and another for the leader. The leader must be an example to the flock, he must be the first to pay strict attention to the word of the Lord, and careful always to practice what he preaches. Even the Apostle Paul, the greatest of all the Christian missionaries, knew that the effectiveness of his preaching, as well as his personal salvation, depended upon his practicing what he preached. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. 9: 27).

One of the chief sins lodged against the Jerusalem religious leaders by Christ was their hypocrisy in claiming to be what they were not. Of them He said: "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do ye not after their works: for they say and do not" (Matt. 23: 2, 3). And in the scathing denunciation that followed, Jesus scored these points: they bound heavy burdens on others, but would not themselves move them with one of their fingers; they did all their works to be seen of men; they were self-centered; they loved the uppermost rooms at feasts, and to be called of men, "Rabbi."

Ezekiel lived at a time of great apostasy. He was among the Israelite captives in Babylon. He was of priestly cast, one of the few priests loyal to the Eternal, and his faithfulness was rewarded by a greater than usual insight into the divine plan by the way of visions representing the varying phases of God's work upon earth. The book of Ezekiel is not a vision of Jehovah in His temple at Jerusalem, but the conception of a God raised above the earth, appearing with all the splendor of the heavens, as above and independent of any earthly locality.

Ezekiel may have been born about the time of the re-discovery of the book of the law in the days of Josiah, so he must have grown up under the influence of its teachings. Separated from their temple at Jerusalem (the city and temple were not yet destroyed), the few people who still feared God came to Ezekiel to obtain knowledge and learn of His ways.

It has been said that Ezekiel was a priest without a temple, hence his interest was more especially centered on the spiritual temple, comprising the men and women

who were faithful to the law of God. The Apostle Paul phrased it: "Ye are the temple of the living God, . . . the pillar and ground of the truth" (II Cor. 6: 16; I Tim. 3: 15).

As the spiritual leader of a people, and favored by direct messages from God, a great responsibility rested upon him. The people to whom he was sent were very rebellious. Not only was he warned against falling into their perverse way of living, himself; but the dire results of such disloyalty were to be pictured to the people. His mission was to speak the word of the Lord whether they would hear or whether they should refuse to hear. Destruction and doom was to be the sad lot of all who refused to hearken. At the final Judgment the sword of judicial wrath should terminate the existence of all who promised to serve God and then refused to hear His word.

The responsibility of a God-appointed watchman as revealed to Ezekiel is recorded in chap. 3: 17—21. In any case the sinner should die in his iniquity, but if the watchman were negligent and failed to warn the wicked man of his wickedness, two would be to blame, two would prove themselves unfit for the "well done" of the Judge, and would reap the "second" or judicial death. The dire results of failure to warn our brother is stated with even greater clarity in chap. 33, and in one trenchant statement in v. 7 the importance of this Christian duty is spelled out: "O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me." Psalm 141: 5 presupposes the need for warning and reveals the attitude the recipient of the warning should take: "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me: it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head."

Ezekiel 2: 8 closes with the words: "open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee." There must be a willingness on our part to eat what God gives us. God does not force anyone to eat the food He provides. Each individual must eat of his own free choice. Each must be convinced that it is to his or her eternal advantage to eat. And the heavenly food is "without money and without price." We must eat and delight in fatness.

Jeremiah, a contemporary of Ezekiel, said he took great delight in eating the word of God (15: 16). We find however, that, as in a natural "corrective" or "curative" diet that which is best for us is not always sweet, and often that which works drastic reaction is needed. Ezekiel 3: 3 reveals that upon eating the roll of the book—or the divine truths God wanted him to take in as nourishment—in his mouth the taste was as sweet as honey, but nothing is said of its reaction. A similar statement in Rev. 10: 10 gives the reaction that often accompanies eating the word of God: "And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter."

The reasonableness and realistic promises of the Word are usually sweet to our taste; but the real eating and digestive process of doing the commandments necessary to stir and change our fixed habits and manner of life seems unpleasant and even "bitter." It is then that we need to look to the end of the matter, to the good that will be accomplished in us. Then let us hear what God says to us, open our mouths wide and eat what He gives us.



# Your Questions Answered



## BIBLICAL PERSONAL CURRENT

Do you have a question? Personal replies to Biblical questions will be sent to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

**Does the Bible forbid taking a drink of liquor, not to get drunk, but just for social reasons?**

The Bible says: "Abstain from every form of evil," and the drinking of alcoholic beverages is one of the evils of the land. The greatest drunkard started that downward road by taking the first innocent-appearing drink—for social reasons. Paul said that no drunkard "shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:10), and drinking leads to drunkenness. (His counsel to Timothy, "Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities," in no way conflicts with the principle of temperance. Timothy was permitted the use of "a little wine" as a medicine and not as a beverage.)

One may feel that a little drink does not hurt him and that he is always able to control himself. Perhaps so, but consider your weaker brother. Your example may start him onto a road which will be his ruin. It is always a man's duty to beware lest he put a "stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Rom. 14:13). See also the Wise Man's counsel concerning wine, in Proverbs 23:29—35.

**Who are to be the subjects of the Resurrection?**

The key to the solution of this question is given by Paul. "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" (Rom. 2:12). All who have come under the law of God, that is, all who knew God's law and agreed to keep it, whether faithful or unfaithful, shall be raised from the dead and called to Judgment at Christ's second coming. (He shall send His angels to summon this class before Him. See Mark 13:27.) All who never knew God's law or never entered into covenant to serve Him shall remain in the grave for ever. They shall be "as though they had not been" (Obad. 16).

**Do you accept the Old and New Testaments as of equal value?**

Our faith is founded on both. "The household of God" is "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:19—21). If we were to accept the Old Testament and not the New, or *vice versa*, we should be leaving out part of the foundation furnished by God, and our house would not stand. "The things written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4).

The Law of Moses, with its ritual and sacrifices, became a dead letter with the first advent of Christ; but the words of the Prophets are as vital today as when spoken.

**Why is this wisdom of God said to be kept close from the fowls of the air?**

Comparing "spiritual with spiritual" as our Bible rule instructs us (I Cor. 2:13), we understand that it is not blackbirds or sparrows, but the kind of fowls of which Jesus spoke in Luke 8:5, 11, 12. They are the fowls of the air in the ecclesiastical heavens, who, being in opposition to the genuine teaching of God, pluck the seed or Word of God out of the hearts of some who hear, "lest

they should believe and be saved." God's Word is written in symbols, parables, and allegories. It is "here a little and there a little" (Isa. 28:13). The reason it is kept close from the "fowls" is because they do not seek deep, as for a hid treasure, to find it (Prov. 2:1—5).

**Who is the Lucifer in Isa. 14:12?**

He was the king of Babylon and was cast out of power. "Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the scepter of the rulers" (Isa. 14:4). This Lucifer was a ruler, one who had been a star in the political heavens. "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?" (verse 16).

**Is the "mark of the beast" future? (It is getting so you cannot sell a chicken without a stamp on it.)**

The "mark of the beast" (Rev. 13:16—18) represents any affiliation with the beast, which is Rome, or spiritual Babylon. If we believe any of the false doctrines taught by the "beast" we have his mark on our foreheads. If we practice any of the sinful acts as indulged in by the world, we have the mark of the beast on our hands.

The buying and selling referred to in that connection affected those individuals, especially in the early centuries of Christianity, who were forbidden to proclaim the truth unless they conformed in some way to customs of the apostate church.

The stamp on a chicken or on other meats has no connection with the mark of the beast, but is the result of a good law enforced by the Food and Drug Act. This assures the buyer that the food he buys is not diseased but has been tested and approved according to government regulations. The need for this law arose because of many unscrupulous persons, who for filthy lucre's sake, sold diseased animals and birds to meat packing plants or at the open market, with no regard for the health of the consumer.

**What is meant in Matthew 22:18, "Many are called, but few are chosen"?**

Throughout the "day of salvation" many individuals have been called to work in the Lord's vineyard, but comparatively few have rendered worthy and faithful service. The deserters and half-hearted workers by far outnumber the faithful. Hence, only few of the called ones are chosen by Christ at Judgment to be His co-rulers.

In Dan. 7:10 it is stated, "ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." The 100 million who appeared before Him for judgment had covenanted to serve God, and are amenable to judgment. In Rev. 14:1 we are informed that 144,000 stand with Christ upon Mount Zion. They are the *chosen ones*. Because of their faithfulness Christ has selected them out of the many who were called to be co-rulers with Him.

**Who should partake of the bread and wine when the memorial of Jesus' death is observed?**

All who are striving to follow in the footsteps of Christ should do so. Paul delivered this commandment to us as he received it from Christ (I Cor. 11:23). It is a yearly observance, in the evening, the same night on which Jesus met with His disciples.





# Keep Your Religion Busy

—A Fantasy

I journeyed to a town one day,  
A brilliant town not far away.  
A campaign was in progress there  
With banners floating ev'rywhere.  
They flew from buildings stately, tall.  
They fluttered from the old Town Hall.  
From poles and trees they were afloat,  
All groups their efforts did devote  
Their slogan to proclaim.

'Tis called the happy Town of Joy.  
For light and cheer all glooms destroy;  
Its radiance brightens every one,  
From every heart all hate is gone.  
Upon each busy, tidy street  
Where everything was clean and neat,  
The citizens, I found, were all  
Enthused and happy, great and small.  
They had a common aim.

Old men were hurrying along,  
Upon their lips a marching song.  
The children tripped with joy and grace  
At Hallelujah's singing pace.  
Fair maidens, radiant with delight,  
And stalwart youths, with gait upright,  
Moved quickly on where'er they went  
As on some urgent business bent.  
Each day it was the same.

The wives and mothers of the town,  
While willingly to duty bound,  
Were none the less partakers in  
This movement which was sure to win.  
The fathers were in full support;  
The husbands there were "holding fort";  
All residents within this town  
Were shoulder, each, to shoulder bound—  
One purpose to attain.

The atmosphere was charged with zeal.  
This thing you could not help but feel.  
It seemed to dominate the whole,  
One aim held all with full control.  
At last, a thought occurred to me,  
"I'm going to ask some one and see,  
What strong foundation is beneath;  
What wonder-working power doth wreath  
This town's inhabitants."

"A heavenly call has gripped our heart,"  
A lass assured me at the mart.  
"Have you not read on flags unfurled,  
Our message to the watching world?  
'Keep your religion busy,' say  
Those banners which are on display.  
We do it, sir, not just by word,  
As by so many whom you've heard  
Throughout the world today.

"We keep our faith well occupied,  
Daily God's Word is magnified.  
This promises a great reward  
Within the Kingdom of the Lord.

So I must go along my way  
And do important work today.  
But look around, don't hesitate  
Our purpose to investigate,  
While you are in this town.

"Our project will continue on  
Till this our earthly race is run;  
Till heaven's gates shall open wide  
And countless hosts that there reside,  
Shall join the herald of our King,  
Shall come with speed, good news to bring;  
Till we are dazed with that fair sight,  
And earth is blessed with heaven's light  
We shall continue on."

The girl was gone. I turned to see  
A sight most strange, it seemed to me.  
A man stood near, head bowed in prayer.  
A wondering child, stood by him there.  
"O Dad, you didn't get mad today,  
When lame John's hoe was in your way."  
"Oh, no, my son, we're not annoyed  
When our religion is employed,  
Impatience then is gone."

Just then two women passed near by,  
From one of them I heard a sigh,  
"That floating banner means *real work*  
If we its slogan do not shirk.  
Busy religion all the day  
Means busy watching, *all we say*,  
And busy watching, *all we do*.  
It's busy business all day through  
If victory we win!"

I met a man healed of a grudge,  
Who seemed content, I'd surely judge.  
I asked the source of such a cure  
And if it really would endure.  
He said, "It all depends on *me*.  
I *can*, I *will keep* clean and free.  
The key is on that banner there,  
This faith of mine must fruitage bear,  
No precious moments waste."

I walked along with open eyes  
And found still more to my surprise.  
*Busy religion* is the power  
That moves this town from hour to hour.  
They have all sorts of tests and trials  
But they are met with strength and smiles;  
They are convinced of joy and peace,  
And these abound when they increase  
The action of their faith.

I saw the town. Then I returned  
To my own world, but I have learned:  
If I enjoyed that happy town  
That by the river Cheer was found,  
In New Jerusalem my mirth  
Shall far surpass the best on earth.  
But don't forget the rule and key:  
Keep true religion steadfastly,  
And BUSILY ENGAGED.

